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Copy 1 of 9

25X1

26 October 1960

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting on "Security Handling of SAMOS Recoverable Photography," 24 October 1960, held in Dr. Charyk's office.

REFERENCE: Draft Memo for General Goodpaster (20 October 1960; [redacted] attached).

25X1

PRESENT: Dr. Charyk, Under Secretary of the Air Force
General Cabell, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
General Walsh, Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, U. S. Air Force
Brig. Gen. Richard D. Curtin, Director, Office of Missile & Satellite Systems
Brig. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale, Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Special Operations)
Colonel Winterbottom, Chief, Reconnaissance Branch, Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
[redacted]/DPD/DDP

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1. (The meeting was arranged at the instance of General Cabell in pursuance of a discussion at the USIB Executive Session on October 18 on the question of the security handling of the photography to be expected from the recoverable phase of SAMOS. At that time General Cabell had indicated the Director's intention to request the White House for reconsideration of the President's decision on October 5 except SAMOS from the scope of the Presidential Directive of August 26 which dealt with the security handling of satellite intelligence products. The reference paper was read by those present after General Cabell's introductory remarks. At the conclusion of the meeting, Dr. Charyk requested that one copy be left. Colonel Winterbottom was made the custodian.)

25X1

NRO review(s) completed.

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25X1

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2. General Cabell, in his opening remarks, outlined the Director's concern that we plan and act now to avoid drying up the intelligence source which SAMOS in its recovery phase would represent because of Russian countermeasures, physical or political. General Cabell emphasized at the outset that the Director was in no way raising the question of who should manage SAMOS on which matter he was quite content. He noted that Discoverer would terminate in 1961 and as far as he knew no capability other than SAMOS is now planned.

3. Dr. Charyk responded in a sympathetic vein indicating that only recently Secretary Gates had expressed concern that some in the State Department might make a move to turn this capability over to the UN and thus foreclose the exclusive use of the capability for U.S. national defense purposes. It was this thought, he indicated, which prompted him to suggest that this initial meeting be held without a representative of the Department of State. He noted, in comment on the terminal date of Discoverer that there could, of course, be an extension of its life.

4. At various points in the course of the discussion General Walsh with occasional comment from Colonel Winterbottom indicated the following:

a. It was always intended that SAMOS should be open (apart from the substance of the information collected) and that he saw no reason for now trying to hide the fact. Indeed we should be bolder and proceed to make known our capabilities because the American public is going to have to be convinced that it is getting something for the expenditure of money.

b. There is already so much publicity on the recoverable phase of SAMOS that putting it under security wraps would be impossible.

c. It could well be that an effort to submerge SAMOS recovery phase could blow our Discoverer capabilities.

25X1

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d. If it were necessary to put the SAMOS product (of the recoverable phase) into a security system the [] System was already available. There was however plenty of time for this in view of the fact that it would be ten to twelve months before recoverable material of the useful sort would be available. Both he and Dr. Charyk indicated that the Air Force was working on the security handling of the recoverable phase and something on this would be out in a very few days.

e. The Executive Order dealing with security and the implementation of that order by the Department of Defense were very explicit in regard to the meaning of 'SECRET' classification, including injunction for secure handling of information of that classification and penalties for violation. This classification was quite adequate to protect the product and at the same time permit the defense agencies to profitably use the products.

5. General Cabell in response to these various points recognized that SAMOS had been intended as an open venture and that there was much publicity which made the problem of now submerging the recovery phase difficult. On the question of which security system the photography should be handled in, he indicated, he had no concern. This he considered a detail not germane to the critical question. In any event the decision as to how it should be handled could not wait the end of the ten-to-twelve-month period. General Walsh alluded to, for then all the water would be over the dam. He recognized that the point made by General Walsh in paragraph 4 c above might well have validity, but noted that this nor none of the questions involved had yet been explored inasmuch as the President's decision of October 5 had been made without any opportunity for the interested parties to jointly examine the problem and the possibilities.

6. Dr. Charyk in the early stages of the discussion seemed to fluctuate between entire agreement with General Cabell's concern and General Walsh's various points of view. Then in a

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reflective mood he touched on steps which might be useful in preserving for a longer time the nature of our successes in the second phase of SAMOS, toying with the possibilities of reporting difficulties and failure when in fact we were achieving some results. However, he noted that all of the steps in the sequence from recovery to readout would have to still be valid and admitted or observers now well informed on SAMOS would raise questions.

7. General Cabell suggested to Dr. Charyk that such speculation was exactly the kind of imaginative approach which he believed the Department of Defense and CIA together, along with the State Department as and when appropriate, should put their minds to develop rather than to conclude that nothing could be done to preserve our freedom of action in the handling of the recoverable product. He recognized that the sharp cutoff (at inception of recovery) proposed in the draft paper might be impractical and he would not at this time presume to be definitive on what was the best approach. He was firm, however, in his belief that an attack on the problem needs to be made and that he was quite content to have Dr. Charyk take the leadership in the matter, including the approach at the Department of State. Dr. Charyk, after some querying as to whether Ambassador Cumming fully represented the Department's views, suggested that they might want to begin with the Secretary or Mr. Dillon.

8. The meeting concluded with Dr. Charyk indicating that he would discuss the matter with Secretary Gates, and if he agreed, arrange for discussions between the CIA and the Department of State.

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Chief
Special Requirements Staff/DPD/DDP

Attachment:
Reference

Copy 1--C/SRS
2--DDI
3--Dir/PIC
4--DDP
5--AC/DPD
6--SO/DPD
7--IO/Ops/DPD
8--IO/OPS/DPD
9--C/SRS

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APPROVED:

4 NOV 1960

Acting Director of Central Intelligence

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